

come with review of a wide range of issues such as housing, education and people involved with the criminal justice system, to name but a few.

I am confident Jerome will uphold the highest level of judicial decorum and professional integrity as a member of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. I recommend Jerome A. Holmes for appointment to this important judicial position.

If you have any questions, please call me at (619) 338-4708.

Sincerely,

STEVEN BINDER,
Deputy Public Defender.

CITY RESCUE MISSION,
Oklahoma City, OK, June 21, 2006.

Re Nomination of Jerome A. Holmes, Esq. to the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.

Hon. JAMES M. INHOFE,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR INHOFE: I am writing in support of the nomination of Jerome A. Holmes, Esq., to the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. I have known Jerome since 2001 when Jerome and I were selected for the class of Oklahoma City Leadership. In 2003, Jerome was asked to serve as a director on the board of City Rescue Mission, a local homeless shelter and rehabilitation center located in Oklahoma City.

Jerome is a recognized leader in many levels of community service. Locally, he currently serves as Chairman of the Board for City Rescue Mission. His leadership has greatly contributed to City Rescue Mission's national recognition as a model rescue mission for the homeless and poor. Nationally, he currently serves as a Commissioner on the American Bar Association's Commission on Homelessness and Poverty where his work has received national recognition. I can personally attest to Jerome's leadership ability seasoned with character and integrity.

Jerome is passionately dedicated to his profession as well as his volunteer leadership roles. He has gained the respected of his colleagues in the legal profession as well as those in the human services realm. I have witnessed Jerome in a variety of leadership situations and have always been greatly impressed with his demeanor, temperament, and thoroughness. Jerome is the first person I call when I need a fair unbiased carefully considered point of view—he leaves no stone unturned. I highly recommend Jerome Holmes for confirmation to the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit—he will serve our country well.

Respectfully,

REV. GLENN GRANFIELD,
President/CEO.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK
July 24, 2006.

Hon. JAMES INHOFE,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR INHOFE: This letter is written to support the nomination of Jerome Holmes to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. I am an African American attorney and active member of the community as well as an adjunct teacher at Douglass High School and I hope that Jerome is confirmed by the U.S. Senate. I have known Jerome for almost 15 years and I am very proud to call him a friend. It was that friendship I relied upon when I asked that he serve as a volunteer coach for the Frederick Douglass High School Mock Trial team which has a predominantly African American student population.

Jerome was very instrumental in helping the Frederick Douglass team in the first

year of competition advance in the competition. It was a result of his personal and professional dedication to the students that he was successful in helping inspire these young African American students both male and female to excel in this academic competition. I know Jerome stated that he was greatly enriched by the young men and women that competed on his team.

I strongly believe that Jerome Holmes has the integrity, personal track record and character to represent the 10th Circuit in a successful manner. Jerome Holmes is a good person who has always reflected his strong belief in the American dream. I personally witnessed as he was able to effectively, passionately and successfully share with the Douglass students that the dreams they hold can be realized in the same manner. I am confident that Jerome Holmes if given the opportunity to serve will uphold the Constitution first and foremost and serve in such a manner that I along with the mock trial students at Douglass will celebrate this achievement.

If I can provide additional information please don't hesitate to contact me.

L. DON SMITHERMAN, ESQ.,
Attorney at Law.6

RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS OF AMERICA

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, this past June, the National Association of Development Organizations, NADO, formed the Rural Planning Organizations of America, RPO America, a national voluntary organization, which was designed to strengthen our Nation's rural transportation planning, development, and infrastructure system.

Under the leadership of NADO, RPO America will support rural transportation planners and practitioners by providing professional development, peer networking, research and educational initiatives in order to promote and showcase the benefits and value of transportation planning and infrastructure development throughout our Nation's rural communities.

Investing in our rural roadways and bridges is more than just investing in concrete and steel; it is also an investment in our future. For this reason, it is essential that our Nation's rural transportation professionals be provided with the necessary tools and support to promote and showcase the value, benefits, and accomplishments of rural transportation planning and development.

Efficient transportation infrastructure plays a critical role in a successful and thriving community. Furthermore, a reliable transportation system within our Nation's rural community is not only critical to our rural communities but also to our Nation's economy.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this newly formed organization that will support the role of rural transportation planners and the efforts to improve rural community access throughout the country.

SMALL BUSINESS PENSION AND RETIREMENT SAVINGS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have long believed that it is my responsibility and the duty of this Chamber to help small businesses, as they are the driver of this Nation's economy, responsible for generating approximately 75 percent of net new jobs annually.

On Monday I introduced legislation that would help to address the retirement needs of millions of small business employees. My bill will make it easier for small employers to offer pension and 401(k) benefits to their employees, who typically have lower retirement savings rates. My bill makes it easier for small businesses to offer a "DB/K plan" which is a combination of a defined benefit plan and a section 401(k) plan that is included in a single plan document. Currently, due to defined benefit plans' complex rules and high establishment costs, many small businesses are unable to set up these types of pension plans for their employees. Instead, many small businesses choose to offer less complex 401(k) plans that do not require employer contributions and offer their employees less guaranteed retirement benefits.

Many small employers would like to offer defined benefit pension plans but are currently hampered by top-heavy rules designed to prevent large companies from exclusively offering pensions to key employees. These well-meaning regulations prevent most small companies, with a few key employees, from providing pension benefits. Legislation that establishes DB/K plans would provide small businesses with reasonable exemptions from these top-heavy rules. This increased flexibility will enable employers to offer employees pension benefits as well as the capability to save incrementally in 401(k) type accounts.

Another advantage of DB/K plans is that they offer employees increased flexibility. Employees with DB/K plans would be allowed to take their DB/K assets with them when they switch employers. This portability would make DB/Ks attractive to many younger employees, who tend to change jobs often. Portability is a DB/K innovation not offered by traditional defined benefit plans which have vesting periods and stop accumulating value when the employee leaves a company. For older workers, the main attraction would be the defined benefit feature, which provides that at least part of their retirement savings would provide a monthly pension check at retirement.

According to the Employee Benefit Research Institute, only 16 percent of employees at companies with 10 workers or fewer and 32 percent of employees at companies with 100 employees or fewer participate in their company-sponsored retirement savings plans. Comparatively, almost 60 percent of employees at companies with more

than 1,000 workers save for retirement through a company sponsored plan. Small business workers' low participation rates in retirement savings plan are troubling as small businesses employ half of all private sector employees. Many policymakers who are closely watching the aging of the American population worry that small business owners' and their employees' low savings rates will leave this group inadequately prepared to pay for their retirements. The creation of DB/K plans is one option for helping small business owners and their employees increase their overall retirement savings.

Under this legislation each part of the DB/K plan would be subject to the present-law rules for defined benefit plans or 401(k) plans, but the rules would be simplified. Like 401(k) plans, the proposed DB/Ks would allow employees to make pretax contributions to their accounts, could include employer matching funds and permit employees to invest their 401(k) portion in mutual funds etc. The assets of both components of the DB/K plan could be held in a trust covered by a single trust instrument. However, the assets of the defined benefit component of the plan and the assets of the 401(k) component of the plan must be clearly identified and allocated to the appropriate part of the trust.

“DISCOVERY” SPACE SHUTTLE LANDING

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise in celebration of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's successful return to Earth of Space Shuttle *Discovery* and to welcome the crew of flight STS-121 home.

Over the last few decades, NASA has experienced tragic lessons in the dangers of space exploration. That is why it was heartwarming to see Commander Steven Lindsey, Pilot Mark Kelly, and Mission Specialists Michael Fossum, Lisa Nowak, Stephanie Wilson, and Piers Sellers, safely return home after spending 13 days in orbit.

After two weather-related delays, the *Discovery* launched on July 4, 2006, Independence Day. During the STS-121 mission, the crew made critical tests of shuttle safety improvements. In addition, the crew transported European Space Agency astronaut, Thomas Reiter, to the International Space Station where they delivered additional supplies and equipment. During their time on the International Space Station, the STS-121 crew worked in conjunction with the Expedition 13 crew on joint operations. The crew also performed maintenance on the International Space Station's mobile transporter and tested orbiter heat shield repair techniques during their three space walks. The flight marked the 115th space shuttle flight and was the second flight since the 2003 *Columbia* tragedy.

This successful mission is a testament to NASA and our valiant astro-

nauts that continue to strive for excellence. Through current exploration, the lives of those lost in both the *Columbia* and *Challenger* accidents, including Astronaut Ellison Onizuka, who was born and raised in my home State of Hawaii, live on. I am proud of the advances we have made in space exploration and am grateful for all those who have made the dream of space exploration possible. Again, I extend my warm welcome to the *Discovery* crew and congratulate them on completing their mission.

REMEMBERING YVONNE GOODMAN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Yvonne R. Goodman. Funeral services were held for her this morning. Yvonne served on my Washington, DC, staff in the Senate and in the House of Representatives for a total of 28 years, and she worked for my predecessor in the House of Representatives, Congressman H.R. Gross, for 25 years. She began helping me the first day I arrived on Capitol Hill and continued until she retired in 2002. In total, Yvonne served the people of Iowa for a remarkable 53 years. There is no doubt that Iowans benefited from her loyalty to their representatives in the Congress and her standard of excellence in her work. I was very fortunate to have her on my staff. Yvonne was from Osage, IA. She was a special person and a valuable and trusted employee. She made a great contribution with her selfless and dedicated public service. Her husband Jim is also a friend. He, too, worked in government and shared Yvonne's commitment to the people's business. Yvonne and Jim were an integral part of my office family for 28 years. They touched the lives of so many fellow staffers with their caring ways. They were gardeners who loved to share their beautiful flowers and plants. My wife Barbara joins me today in extending our sympathy to Jim and saluting the life and many good deeds of his beloved Yvonne.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK

• Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, on behalf of all Oregonians, I wish to recognize the recent accomplishments of Oregon's first national park at Crater Lake.

President Theodore Roosevelt had never set his eyes on the deep blue waters of Crater Lake when he signed the law in 1902 making Crater Lake the fifth oldest national park in the United States. He was, however, well aware of the 17-year battle fought to make its protection a reality. The father of Crater Lake, William Gladstone Steel, devoted his life to seeing Crater Lake protected and walked these halls of Congress to make sure that the majesty of this Oregon jewel was forever enshrined. Hard work and perseverance

have been at the core of the entire storied history of Crater Lake National Park.

On August 25, 2006, the Crater Lake National Park will open the doors to its new Science and Learning Center. Just as William Gladstone Steel spent his early years participating in scientific experiments at Crater Lake, the Science and Learning Center will provide the public with an entry into one of nature's most spectacular laboratories. Scientists, teachers, students, artists and the general public alike will benefit from this new facility at the park, which will be one of a very few National Park Service Learning Centers in the Nation.

The opening of the Crater Lake Science and Learning Center is the culmination of many years of perseverance and hard work from the dedicated staff and partners of Crater Lake National Park. Specifically, I want to recognize the dedication and ingenuity of Crater Lake National Park Superintendent, Charles “Chuck” Lundy. Chuck has gone above and beyond the call of duty and Oregon is lucky to have him at the helm of the Crater Lake “Phantom Ship.” During Chuck's 8-year tenure at the Park, he has worked in the spirit of William Gladstone Steel using his innovative mind to mold the future of America's deepest and most pristine lake. The Crater Lake Centennial license plate campaign, under Chuck's direction, has given each and every Oregonian the ability to express just how special Crater Lake is to them and to our State. As of July of 2006, 138,000 license plates have been purchased by Oregonians, with the proceeds going directly to the new Science and Learning Center.

Mr. President, I am extremely proud of the successes being exhibited by the outstanding team of National Park Service employees at Crater Lake National Park. I congratulate them on the opening of the Science and Learning Center and wish them all the best as they continue to preserve and protect the national park Oregonians love so much.●

PASSING OF MAX METZGER

• Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I wish today to recognize the passing of my friend Max Metzger this past Saturday morning. As we grieve the loss for his family, the citizens of St. Paul are grateful for the music he brought to them. As the former mayor of St. Paul, I had the opportunity to become acquainted with Max and was touched by the love of music he brought to our community.

To say Max was an icon in the St. Paul Music scene would be an understatement. For 56 summers he brought music to thousands of Minnesotans, conducting pops concerts at the Como Lakeside Pavilion. He was a gifted musician, director, and entertainer. He was a kind and gentle man with a great sense of humor, a love for his city, and passionately devoted to his wife Nell.